



## A. PROJECT INFORMATION

### 1. ZONING DEVELOPMENT REVIEW CASE INFORMATION

Application is: ☒ Development Project ☐ Protest Appeal

ZDR Case Number: DCP-ZDR-2023-10900

Project Description: Change of use

Case Review Date: November 2023

Zoning Specialist: JV

### 2. SITE INFORMATION

Development Address: 5300 Stanton Ave

Parcel (s): 81-M-150

Zoning Designation: R1D-L

Neighborhood: Stanton Ave

Registered Community Organization: None

Date of Development Activities Meeting: N/A

### 3. CONTACT INFORMATION

Applicant (phone and email): Nathan Doherty (412-297-3347 | [ndoherty@vcs.org](mailto:ndoherty@vcs.org))

## B. ZBA REQUESTS

Type of Request: Special Exception Code Section: 911.02

Description: Community Home in R1D District



**INNOVATIVE BRIDGE HOUSING PROGRAM  
BRIDGE, EMPLOYMENT, AND TRAINING (BET)**

**Vincentian de Marillac**

and

**Community Human Services**

## **Vincentian de Marillac Reimagined: A New Chapter in Human Services**

For the last 80 years, Vincentian de Marillac, located at 5300 Stanton Avenue in Pittsburgh's Stanton Heights neighborhood, has served as a hub of community human service, first as a former mansion converted into a nursing home for thirteen residents and later as a larger senior care community serving more than 100 seniors in a given year through short-term rehabilitation and long-term care.

In May 2023, amid economic headwinds and myriad industry factors, Vincentian made the difficult but financially necessary decision to cease long-term care operations on the campus. All residents and staff members were offered, and in almost all cases accepted, living accommodations and job opportunities within other Vincentian ministries throughout Allegheny County.

Since then, several actions were taken to secure and surveil the Vincentian de Marillac campus, and to deter unlawful entry. Inside the building, motion detectors, water leakage detectors and natural gas detectors were installed to monitor building conditions, and door release contacts were installed on exterior doors and reinforced from the inside to bolster the existing locks. Additional security cameras were installed, which are monitored by both Vincentian staff and a third-party company. Vincentian continues regular in-person visits to the campus.

Almost immediately after nursing operations were ceased on the campus, Vincentian's executive leadership began investigating potential mission-oriented alternate uses for the property, in keeping with its decades-long nonprofit human services ethos. Community Human Services (CHS) was quickly identified as an ideal partner. Created in 1970 in response to the community's needs in South Oakland, CHS's mission is to empower individuals and families to live in stable housing, connect to community resources, build relationships, and access quality food. As one of the largest providers in Allegheny County's Continuum of Care, CHS has extensive experience in developing new housing programs and successful outcomes.

### **Description of Services**

CHS's Bridge, Employment, and Training ("BET") program proposed at 5300 Stanton Avenue in Pittsburgh will accommodate 50-56 individuals experiencing housing instability. The building contains 28 sleeping rooms to be used as living quarters for the target population. The rooms do not have private kitchens, but the lodging and meals (breakfast and dinner) are provided daily, for participants, who will pay program fees based on a sliding scale. The targeted population will be recruited from the shelter system, in collaboration with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and will be eligible for 3-6 month temporary living quarters, and supportive services that will aid them in transitioning to independent housing and employment. Eligibility for the BET program will be focused on individuals with a lower vulnerability score as measured by Allegheny County through their assessment tool, AHA (Allegheny Housing Assessment). Other eligibility criteria include:

- (1) Stable in shelter system for at least three weeks;
- (2) Demonstrates ability to live with multiple individuals in a shared space; and
- (3) Demonstrate a high level of interest in gaining employment/income and independent housing, quickly.

In addition to providing temporary housing, the program will work with eligible and enrolled individuals to eliminate barriers or challenges to housing, food, and job security through a highly skilled, resourceful team. The team will work to support individuals in reconnecting with family, friends, and their community to ensure they have social support systems aiding long-term sustainability. The participants and their team will work together so that participants can train in system navigation, life skills, relationship building, resume building and more.

### **Service Description**

The BET program is rooted in evidence-based practice and will be highly adaptable based on the needs of each individual and the group and this section includes an overview of the proposed activities. Living quarters for each individual will consist of a sleeping room that they will share with another program participant. There are shared bathrooms. The facility is ideal and provides ample space for programming, innovation, and community building. The

goal is to work with individuals as rapidly as possible to find sustainable housing and employment opportunities and will be limited to a 6-month time frame.

**Key administrative and programmatic personnel** include the *Program Manager*, who maintains oversight of proposed activities, budgeting and compliance, supervision of site and staff, and data collection and reporting. *Community Support Specialists/Peers/Coordinators* have demonstrated their excellence in helping participants reach their goals and will continue to serve as the main providers of services. Key activities of *Community Support Specialists/Peers/Coordinators* include initial assessments of service needs, comprehensive service plans, coordination and linkage of services, monitoring and re-evaluation of plans, and in general, adherence, support, and navigation. *Housing and Employment Coordinators* will support participants toward their goals. *The Director* will continue to provide oversight and act as an organizational ambassador, along with the *Executive Team*, to establish working relationships and facilitate continuity of care with other community organizations and the community at large.

**Program design will include:**

- Lodging and two meals per day.
  - o Participants with income will pay a monthly program fee ranging from \$25-\$150 based on their income. If housing stability and employment is achieved at the end of their 3-6 month involvement, participants will be eligible for an incentive in the amount they contributed towards fees to support their transition to independence.
- Transportation.
  - o Participants will receive bus tickets based on the need for essential activities such as interviews, apartment viewings, reconnection meetings with family or other social supports, etc.
  - o Staff will also support transportation to appointments based on need.
- Assessments for Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), housing and employment, etc. will be conducted at move-in. Participants will be assigned to two specialized staff that are proficient in employment and housing that they will meet with at least once weekly to work towards their goals. Participants must demonstrate active work towards their goals to remain enrolled.
  - o The site will be staffed 24/7 by qualified and trained individuals who have been vetted by CHS.
- Participants will meet weekly or more with the Housing Coordinator and demonstrate efforts towards goals.
  - o The coordinator and participant will work together to identify non-traditional housing options such as doubling up with roommates, moving in with family or friends, as well as Low-Income Public Housing options and private, independent renting or home ownership. With the coordinator's access to resources and information, the program will take an educational approach and support the participants in learning independent, housing related skills (i.e. landlord tenant relations, apartment searches, how to enroll in utility and public benefits, etc.
- Participants will meet weekly or more with the Employment Coordinator and demonstrate efforts towards goals.
  - o The coordinator and participant will work together to obtain or increase the participant's income. The coordinator will be highly knowledgeable in local training programs and other opportunities and will have capacity to refer. This individual will have specialized training to escalate applications for Social Security Disability Income for those eligible. The coordinator will train participants in areas such as: resume building, job searches, public benefit system and requirements, etc.
- Incentives will be used creatively to motivate program participants to work towards their goals.
  - o Incentives will be used in multiple forms to motivate participants to achieve their housing, employment, and other goals. Incentives will be distributed equitably among participants based on progress as tracked by staff. The types of incentives for participants will vary depending on the individual. Types of incentives will include gift cards, furniture items for their new home, utility arrear and security deposit payments, professional clothing for new employment, cash incentives for roommates or family/friends supporting individuals in resolving housing instability.

- Group programming will be carried out weekly by direct service staff and will be related to life skills, training, tenancy rights and mediation, etc. Group programming will be prioritized by participant needs as indicated by staff and the participants.

### **Mission Alignment**

Sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Vincentian was founded in 1924 with a mission to nurture and sustain a ministry of compassionate care that preserves the human dignity of persons within a diverse and changing society. Similarly, CHS empowers individuals and families to live in stable housing, connect to community resources, build relationships, and access quality food.